Margaret Lenzner
3501 Macomb Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
msrlen@ix.netcom.com

16970

May 4, 2003

Geoffrey Griffis, Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20001

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Dan Taglierini, Director
Ken Laden, Associate Director
DC Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Andrew Altman
Office of Planning
801 N. Capitol Street NE, Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002

Gentlemen,

As a longtime resident of Cleveland Park, I have been active in local community affairs for decades. As you know, residents of Cleveland Park, like those in many neighborhoods all over DC, appreciate the character of their residential neighborhood, and go to a lot of trouble to maintain it. One exemplary characteristic of Cleveland Park that we particularly value is the balance that exists among the various land uses here: quiet neighborhood streets coexist in close proximity to vibrant, low-scale commerce on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, and to some very prominent institutional uses, like the Washington Cathedral and several public and private schools.

Maintaining this balance is not easy, and it is particularly precarious now with the proposal by NCRC to expand. DDOT has determined that this school's operations are dangerous on Highland Place and that the only way to make it viable is to dramatically alter the residents' vehicular access.

If zoning regulations mean anything, there should be no question about their purpose: in residential neighborhoods, no non-residential use should be allowed that interferes with the residents' quiet enjoyment of their homes. Exceptions that BZA or the Zoning Commission might grant for a non-conforming use must be subject to this test. DDOT has clearly determined that NCRC's operation violates this standard. To try to remedy the defect by burdening the homeowners would be a clear violation of the intent and requirements of zoning regulations.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 178

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.178

This community struggles with many institutional and commercial uses which threaten its fundamental residential character. City agencies have become more supportive of our efforts in recent years to prohibit commercial and institutional activities which violate zoning limitations and detrimentally affect our community. For example, the ANC3c and other community groups have worked diligently with the Cathedral, with DDOT and with other City agencies to find ways to lessen the impact of Cathedral activities on our neighborhood. Rather than limiting residential access on Highland Place, DDOT's determination should be recognized as proof that NCRC's operations now, and as proposed, are in clear violation of existing zoning regulations. If NCRC wants to expand, it should be encouraged to do so somewhere else, and only where its impact has no detrimental effect.

Sincerely,

Margaret Lenzner

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